

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1802

August 2, 2021

The Honorable John Bel Edwards
Governor of the State of Louisiana
Office of the Governor
900 North Third St.
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9004

Dear Governor Edwards:

As the U.S. Representative for the 2nd Congressional District of Louisiana, I write to you as we face an unprecedented housing crisis. On July 31st, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's eviction moratorium expired, leaving millions around the country facing eviction or housing insecurity caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, a staggering 52% of households in Louisiana are likely to suffer eviction or foreclosure. This is well above the national average of 35%.

The national eviction moratorium was in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and prevented the eviction of tenants unable to make rental payments. The moratorium had a profound impact on our communities. It helped slow the spread of the virus and allowed Louisianans to keep a roof over their heads during this crisis.

Along with the moratorium, the Emergency Rental Assistance Program was created using federal dollars allocated from the CARES Act and was designated to be used for either past-due rent, future rent, or utilities. The mission of this program is to serve the maximum number of households and ensure housing for tenants while also compensating landlords for unpaid rent during the eviction moratoria. With the moratorium expiring, we must do all we can to get the remaining Emergency Rental Relief funds to those that need it most.

Currently, thousands of families across the state are in danger of losing their homes at a time when the Coronavirus Delta variant has created a highly transmissible and dangerous situation. I write to you today to ask that you do everything within your powers to extend the eviction moratorium in our state.


Having spoken with housing leaders and advocates in our community who are combatting this disaster on the frontlines, it is abundantly clear to me that we are not prepared for how many tenants and owners need assistance with the moratorium expiring. Housing is a human right, and it is our duty to ensure that nobody in our community goes unhoused. It is incumbent on us as elected officials to do all we can to equitably distribute the necessary funding to support working families.

As of the morning of today, the State of Louisiana's U.S. Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance Program has disbursed just over \$18 million in utilities assistance. This relief has been coordinated in conjunction between the Louisiana Housing Corporation and the Louisiana Office of Community Development and has only helped about 3,500 tenants remain in their homes. While this has had an indelible impact on the lives of those fortunate enough to receive this assistance, much more is needed. This program received hundreds of millions of dollars in federal money to be used towards emergency rental relief yet less than 15% has been distributed thus far.

Statewide, according to the Census Bureau, nearly 114,000 households are likely to be evicted or foreclosed without aid. On July 30th, the Chicago Tribune reported that Louisiana has more adults behind on payments than any other state in the nation with 267,943 total adults behind on payments. As the state ranked worst for at-risk tenants, we must follow the lead of other states and act on common sense solutions.

While I will continue fighting in Congress to extend the national moratorium, I hope you will do everything you can on the state level to protect Louisianans now. I know that this is not an easy task, but I stand ready to further assist you in this critical matter.

Sincerely,



Troy A Carter, Sr.
Member of Congress

CC:

The Honorable Matthew Jewell
Parish President of St. Charles Parish

The Honorable Pete Dufresne
Parish President of St. James Parish

The Honorable Jaclyn Hotard
Parish President of St. John the Baptist Parish

The Honorable Clint Cointment
Parish President of Ascension Parish

The Honorable Patrick Johnson
President of the Assumption Parish Police Jury

The Honorable J. Mitchell Ourso, Jr
Parish President of Iberville Parish

Bradley Sweazy
Interim Executive Director of the Louisiana Housing Corporation

Traci Watts
Director of the Louisiana Office of Community Development